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## The Hope of Japan

*By*

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• A QUARTERLY •

## FORWARD

There has been such a demand of late for addresses, lectures and publications on Japan that we have thought an ENVELOPE SERIES on that country would be timely. To grasp the full significance of the remarkable changes, political and social, that have taken place in that Empire we should go back to the feudal period. This has meant in turn a writer who knowing the present could contrast it with what he saw with his own eyes fifty years ago. He should also be a man of faith in the presence of Christ as a transforming power in human history.

In Dr. Griffis we find one well qualified to give us the true perspective of the past and to inspire our hope for the future. He went to Japan in 1871 as the first of a long line of special instructors for the Empire. He has been a diligent observer ever since. No one need discount his statements as those of a blind partisan. Nor, on the other hand, can his love for the Japanese people, his faith in them, and his assurance of God's mission for them be doubted. He disclaims any effort to give here a history of the development of Japan since feudal days. This is merely an "impressionistic sketch."

E. F. B.

# The Hope of Japan

BY WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D., L.H.D.

On October first, eighteen hundred and seventy-one, the two thousand feudal vassals of the Lord of Echizen were assembled in the great castle in Fukui, Japan, for farewell and for the burial of feudalism. It was a memorable occasion. Swords, silk, armorial crests and the emblems of heraldry were in spectacular evidence, and the ceremonies foretoking the dawn of a true nationalism were impressive. The feudal lord of Echizen laid down his power and in a noble speech urged his retainers to welcome the new era, to face its conditions manfully and to transfer individual loyalty from him to the Emperor.

On the next day I saw the departure of the daimio to Tokio to become a private citizen, until the new order of nobility (in which he was to be a marquis) was gazetted. The whole city was moved—even to infants, the aged and the bedridden. Tears flowed as in showers. It seemed the end of the world to the plain people. According to approved custom, twelve thousand men and boys walked in the escort and procession to the next town, ten miles or so distant. In the recessional homeward they sang two songs of loyalty—one to the lord whom their fathers had served for seven hundred years and the other to the Emperor. From infancy they had learned the dictum "The Mikado, all men love; the Shogun all men fear;" for the one typified the sceptre and the other the sword; the one compassion, the other force.

For the first time in her history, the Japan as known to us and our ancestors awakened to national and international consciousness.

That was fifty years ago—much water hath run beneath the bridge since then. Three streams indeed have con-





A CELEBRATION IN TOKYO  
The Stars and Stripes and the Rising Sun

verged—streams of formative influence—and the result can only be foreseen by those who, feeling the presence of Christ in Japan, have discovered a divine purpose flowing through the history of this marvelous land. It is of these three streams that I wish to speak. For knowing and appraising them we shall have our hopes in Japan renewed, gain new visions of Japan's mission under God, and be stimulated ourselves to greater Christian endeavor in that mighty Empire. These streams are:

- I. Devotion to the prussian or militaristic ideal of nation-building and civilization as exhibited chiefly in military training, education, law, political theory and practice, and material force.
- II. Play of the French temperament; that is, sensitiveness to environment and a desire to stand well with the world.
- III. Flow of the Anglo Saxon spirit, which expresses itself in democracy, in labor movements, in the demands of big business, spread of franchise and the Christian movement in general.

### I. GERMAN TRAINING

The prussianism in Japan's system is an old story. When about 1870, after being insular hermits for nearly three centuries, the active brained Japanese began to go abroad—some of them not having yet cut off their top-knots—they found to their surprise, that there was a civilization higher than their own. Their complacency received a shock. They of the "Land of Gods," whose soil was first created and was once a part of Heaven itself, were obliged to confess that the West could teach Japan.

Most of their high souled leaders, after long pondering, resolved at once to borrow the material forces of the foreigners and with these to resist two invasions: (I) the advance of the White Peril, real and terrible, flagrant-

ly illustrated in the conquest of India and Java and in the humiliation of China; and (2) the religion of the whites, "the evil sect called Christian," the "corrupt religion of Jesus"—as I used to read on the public edicts everywhere posted on the roads, bridges, ferries and in the towns and villages throughout the Empire.

One of the ways of conserving the nation while at the same time resisting Christianity was to strengthen even to exaggeration, the dogma of the divinity of the Mikado, whose ancestors had reigned "from ages eternal," and to adopt a form of government and a constitution after the model of Prussia. The idea was to check the rising spirit of liberalism, but more especially the growing sentiment and procedure characteristic of English speaking nations. In a word, the military class, wearers of the sword and the holders of power for ten centuries, would hold that power still. They deliberately transferred the right and potency of the samurai's blade to the pen of bureaucracy. The new nation, despite all outward conformity to "progress" and modernism, was to be rooted in military feudalism! Were they to blame when they saw Europe an armed camp, while their first visitors were fleets of warships?

The southern clansmen in power have been, like the Junkers, the power behind the throne. Until the late eighties, despite the Imperial "Charter Oath" of 1867, they staved off even the making of a constitution with a national assembly or Diet. Then Ito, after reading Hamilton—he did not care much for Jefferson—went to Europe to study constitutions. Almost all his time was spent studying Bismark's policy and in hearing German professors in Berlin and Vienna. He visited England only to pass through it. He got his ideas of English constitutional development from a German author. Yamagata also was influenced by Germans in similar ways. These two men and their immediate followers determined the system under which Japan lives today.



After a conclave of four months in the presence of the Emperor the constitution of 1889 was proclaimed. The Liberals educated by English speaking men and books felt betrayed. The model was Prussia rather than England. The ministers were made responsible to the Emperor, not to the Diet!

The militarists had built an impregnable turret on the ship of state, dubbed "fixed expenditures"—chiefly for army and navy, which the Diet could not alter or control. This effectual veto on the popular will prevented the two houses, upper and lower, from having any great influence with the "Mikado," and the Emperor, though an autocrat and free to act, has been for a half century under the control of the clique of Elder Statesmen. An impene-



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MILITARISTS ON THE JOB IN JAPAN

trable veil of secrecy has shrouded the palace and does today to a large extent.

Clan government persisted. In the division of spoil which the militarists ordained the army was officered by the Choshu clan, the navy by Satsuma. Even today it is doubtful if the political parties are less the expression of principle or even of policy, than they are of the strength of the clans and of ancestral associations.

The world knows of Japan's military and naval victories over China and Russia and also of her subjugation of Korea. These military worthies on the soil dictated what in Korea should be said in sermons, or sung in hymns, while the Japanese school teachers appeared in the school rooms in military uniforms with swords, until Premier Hara, Japan's "Commoner," and world opinion in 1919 put a stop to the practice.

At home the hopes of democracy—most evidently planned and yearned for by the great Emperor Mutsuhito, as far as the bureaucrats allowed him to have power—were smothered. Of course the militarists, after the victorious wave, were hailed as the saviours of the country. The education of the growing generation was willingly left with them. Even Jesuitry in Europe was exceeded, when, despite the professed freedom of religion, proclaimed in the Constitution, and the nominal disestablishment of Shinto, the children in the public schools were taken in droves to the ancestral shrines and tombs of the Mikados and compelled to pledge allegiance to the dynasty. The scruples of protesting souls were supposed to be neutralized by official assurance that Shinto (literally theology) was "not a religion."

There is nothing we write in this pamphlet but what the fearless champions of democracy and moral reform in Japan insist upon and openly declare. Meanwhile her people groan under taxation, while her uncultivated and waste land, as well as her need of markets and material give the militarists their double excuse for aggression abroad and the plea of necessary emigration.



The above but suggests the formative force in modern Japan which I have referred to as Prussian: a powerful, well sustained influence exerted in accordance with a militaristic ideal of nation building, calling for a political and social system which should center about the Emperor, and for an educational program which should tend to create a national machine of tremendous potency.

## II. FRENCH TEMPERAMENT

But there are two other formative forces to be reckoned with, either one of which injects a saving element into the situation. One of these is what I call the French temperament of the Japanese people; that is, a sensitiveness to environment, a desire to stand well with the world. None can surpass the Japanese in quickly conforming to the customs of the society they are in. Not one or any of the many varieties of mankind excel them in putting the best foot forward.

This sensuousness is shown in art, in manners, in impressionability and adaptability—certainly in the desire to do the correct thing in the proper way. Perhaps this sensitiveness to environment has been but the natural psychological development in a race born and bred in a land of beauty. Not even an American could live among the wonderful hills and valleys of a volcanic land like Japan without growing sensitive to nature's influence. Perhaps too the strict community sanctions of the long centuries of feudalistic service produced that spirit of conformity which matches Japan's sensitiveness. We do not profess to know. We can only say that there is in the Japanese an intuitive understanding of what others expect of them and a strong impulse not to disappoint.

Add together the art instinct of the people, their desire to act well, this ingrained spirit of conformity and their outstanding sensuousness and we can estimate the effect of the "French temperament" upon the national and international problems created by too much militarism in



IN THE "ALPS OF JAPAN"

Mt. Hodaka, 9,800 feet high, as seen from the road through the Abo Pass

Japan's system. Think of their love of good manners, their cleanliness, their care in dress; recall their high sense of honor expressed in their old custom of harakiri; and their great care of foreigners in Japan and their studied propaganda of friendliness abroad. All this suggests a powerful antidote for isolating prussianism. Japan wants to stand well with the world. She can be counted upon to do the correct thing. That passion for perfection and for success through mastery of details, that aesthetic refinement, that noble spirit which in the late war made us salute France as "the hero nation," that impelling force of patriotism is characteristic of the "Frenchmen of Asia." Indeed we may yet hope that the finer qualities of the French which have moulded and leavened civilization, and to which we Americans owe so much, will assert themselves to make an "eternal Japan"—as the French say—which will conserve what

in their civilization is good, commendable, charming, worthy of our imitation.

I believe that when the Japanese have become a Christian people, as they surely will, there will be in their gift-laden hands, because of their peculiar temperament, much that is demonstrably superior to what we have offered. A sense of loyalty to Jesus (deeper than adherence to symbols, creeds or catechism,) and a development of Christian art, especially in illustration of the Bible that will delight the world, are not the least in their cornucopia of offerings. I look for enrichment of Christianity through them.

### III. THE ENGLISH TEMPER

The third formative force to be reckoned with is that liberalizing spirit which we find so strong in Anglo-Saxon countries. We are talking of Japan's German training, her French temperament; why not then of her English temper? of that which expresses itself in democracy, in labor movements, in the demands of big business, in the spread of the franchise and in the Christian movement?

An almost lifelong study of Japan's history and ours—not as written in popular and chauvinistic forms, but rather by learned scholars and masters of research with sympathetic interpretation—shows me that the two nations are startlingly alike in their development, however they may differ in externals. Intrinsically speaking, the stories of Japanese, English and American growth and expansion are much the same. Nothing has happened there at the other end of the earth which has not happened in Europe or America, if we go back far enough. Human nature on both sides of the earth I have found to be comically, humiliatingly, yet gloriously the same. In awful reality, the need of regeneration by God's Holy Spirit and of saving help from the Source of all Power is equally great in the Anglo-Saxon and Japanese world.

I do not feel that Japan would greatly profit by adopt-





AN EXAMPLE OF THE "FRENCH TEMPERAMENT"

A guest being ceremoniously welcomed

ing blindly all that we mean by the term "Anglo-Saxon civilization." The race of Nippon fortunately has a genius for selection. I believe nevertheless that Japan's true path of progress is more likely to follow with wise and tested adaptations the precedents of freedom which have been so long proved and are now prevalent among the English-speaking peoples. Already has she proved by usage the power of the language of Shakespeare, Milton, Washington and Lincoln. The ideals and pragmatics of these teachers of Anglo-Saxon mold since 1859 are seen today on all sides.

The spirit of liberty is asserting itself in Japan, as in other parts of the world. Democracy has become a force to be reckoned with. Japan has entered upon a political

and social transformation which is likely to resemble England's. Whether or not the German idea of the state will continue to prevail or whether a real parliamentary government like that of Great Britain will evolve, time alone can tell. Yet we can be sure of this: that the spirit which made the England of today is making itself felt right now in Japan; that it will go on working, leavening in time the entire nation, unless an unexpected turn in the tide sweeps Japan back into her old-time feudalistic mind and method.

We will glance at some of these liberalizing forces. First, let us note Big Business. Men of affairs are rising who must be brought into the counsels and the councils of the mighty. Some of them are from plain, common stock, as has been the case in England for hundreds of years. All of them have caught the modern outlook upon life. Some have international vision. All are to be considered forces working for a broader and better



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UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, BANZAI!

Japan, and their number will increase as Japan, following the course of England, becomes a great industrial and commercial nation. Big Business will liberalize Japan's national and international relationships. It has already compelled adjustments in governmental personnel and program.

Secondly, there is the Labor Movement. This is still far from the commanding position held by Labor in the British Isles. Yet it too is a force to be reckoned with. The temper of Old England—or, shall I say, the spirit of democracy—can find its counterpart in Japan. Organized protests, strikes, movements for better conditions,—these are well known forces at work among the industrial circles in Japan today. Tomorrow will witness even greater manifestations of self-assertiveness.

Thirdly, the Spirit of Democracy is also alive within the educated classes, particularly university professors and editors of large dailies who have traveled extensively or have taken time to think deeply. These speak with boldness, and the very fact that they are allowed so to do proves the fear of the conservative powers of the liberal movement of the day.

Fourthly there are the students of Japan. They constitute one of the most progressive bodies to be found in the Empire. Thousands in Japan today stand for freedom and justice. Over 80% of them, we are told by an Imperial University authority, are opposed in general to the program of the militarists and to their methods: to the seizure of Shantung, for example, to the prolonged occupation of Siberia, and to the rough handling of Koreans. While the students may not all maintain their ideals and purposes upon being absorbed into the national life, after graduation, yet many of them will continue to think, pray and strive for that day when there shall be universal suffrage; when under the Emperor, the Premier, the Cabinet and the Diet shall be responsible to the people—as in England. While we cannot expect too much of this element in Japan's life, we nevertheless feel the



intensity of its spirit and place it on the side of democracy. These students are an evidence of the readiness of the people of Japan to think more and more for themselves, and to act accordingly.

Fifth. Last, but by no means least, do I place the Christian Church as a formative force for freedom in Japan. This body of believers is small in numbers—pitifully small. It claims in its membership less than one per cent of Japan's population. Nevertheless, it has vision and virility much beyond its proportionate size and is truly tremendous in its moral influence. Christianity in Japan is not a political movement. Its organization is free from political intrigue. It is essentially democratic



THE GATE TO DOSHISHA'S CAMPUS

in its spirit and in its effect. I have never known a Japanese Christian who was not a democrat at heart. Neither do I know any movement in Japan that gives better training in self-government or that tends to exalt the dignity of the common man or that calls him forth more into national and social life than does Christianity in Japan. Where the spirit of Christ works freely, there evolves most naturally and irresistibly a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

### CHRIST THE HOPE OF JAPAN

This Spirit of Jesus is the soul of the liberalizing forces of Japan. The transforming power of Christianity has already had much to do in bringing about the social changes that are



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Weaving What?

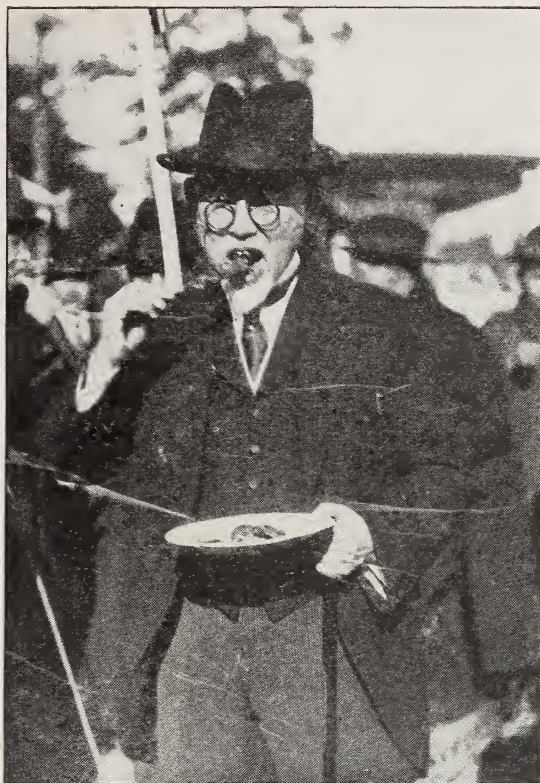
so readily noted by those who have followed the history of Japan during the past fifty years. To tell of even a few of the changes in the civilization of Japan since 1870 is to picture again the England of the 12th Century. Then there was not a chimney in the land; no windows; no chairs, no public hospital, no lighted streets at night; there were beggars by the thousands,



gamblers and social outcasts by myriads. Occasional famines swept off thousands at a time, leaving whole villages only collections of charnel houses, Public executions of criminals by fire and roads often lined by heads on pillars were not uncommon sights. Prostitution and venereal diseases were rampant. The standard plots of romance were vile. The word "love" referred to that which was outside of the marriage relation.

Popular literature, mostly pornographic, and the stage, were frequently so obscene as to call forth the drastic interference of the authorities. We say nothing of the phallic emblems and shrines made into toys, ceramic ware and in other forms too disgusting to mention.

The commoner in any of the four grades in the non-military classes was virtually without rights before the ever armed samurai with his swords. Feudalism being the framework of society, there was little or no sense of individual personality apart from class or office, and women in the laboring class, in a contract, were referred



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BARON GATO

A Representative of Big Business



to by the same numeral as that used for beasts of burden. Trade and commerce were in low repute, the merchant being at the lowest rung of the social ladder.

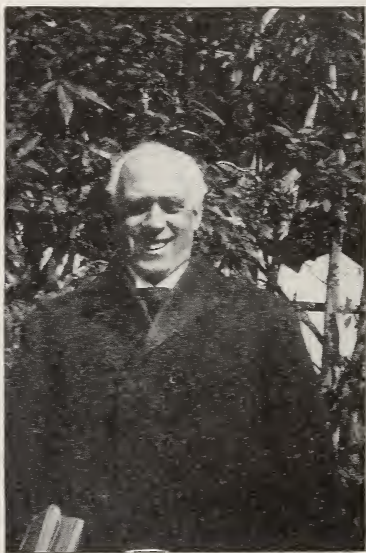
The number of blind and diseased was amazing. Every third person seemed pockmarked, for preventive medicine was almost unknown. Deformed children were very rare, for these were not allowed to be born or to live.

In industry, only hand labor was known. In the language, few or none of the modern terms for freedom or personality, or what is the very soul of our civilization, were known. In the organization of the family, woman was chattel and toy. It was a common thing for the head of the household wanting a male heir to advertise for a female child-producer, to be paid for a birth, and to be discharged after her offspring was weaned.

The typical Japanese family was formed on principles abhorrent to the Christian ideal and practice, and this explains why few or none of the words relating to the position of an individual in the family had the same depth

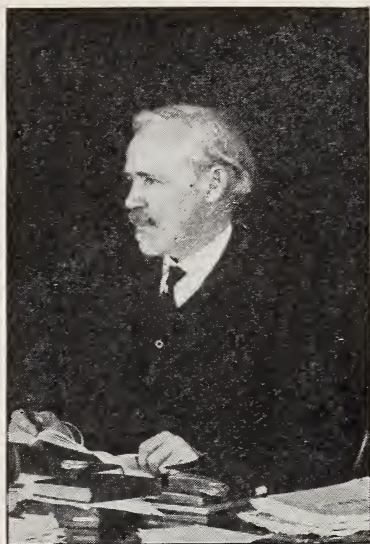
of meaning or cluster of associations which the religion of Jesus has given and compelled in western lands.

In a word, the house was everything and the individual nothing. Japanese civilization was on the lower or communal type. Even yet her nationality at many points has not emerged from the primitive, and the individual is but emerging from the group. One has to read a book like Luffman's "The Harvest of Japan" to realize the terrible facts which lie in the background, and which no gloss of material civilization can cover up.



REV. HILTON PEDLEY, D. D.  
Kyoto

I speak what I know and testify to that I have seen. But there is a bright side to the picture. And what do we see? A marvelous transformation; a new Japan, modeled outwardly at least after the best in the world; a nation honored as only a few are; an acknowledged leader in education, sanitation, industry and government. To be sure, this has not all been due to organized Christianity. The Japanese would have brought about these changes for the better through their desire to stand well in the world, or through their own military necessity of developing a healthy, intelligent and powerful national machine. Yet is it not true that Japan was moved to make these progressive changes by the ideals and by the sentiment of the West, which in turn had felt the humanitarian power of Christianity? Moreover, have there not been within Japan's very boundaries for over fifty years Christian workers of striking character and moral aggressiveness, both foreign missionaries and Japanese Christian leaders? These directly or indirectly have expressed the spirit of Jesus Christ. Indeed, I believe that I can here repeat in all confidence what I said in a previous ENVELOPE SERIES (1907) entitled "Christ the Creator of New Japan." Behind almost every one of the radical reforms that have made a new Japan stands a man—too often a martyr—who was directly moved by the spirit of Jesus, or who is or was a pupil of the missionaries.



REV. D. W. LEARNED, D. D.  
Kyoto

What would have been all the wonders wrought under the eyes of such giants of power as Verbeck, Brown,

Hepburn, Williams, Ballagh, Greene, Gordon, Davis, DeForest, Pettie and others without the faith, the courage, the loyalty, the lifelong devotion of such Japanese as Okuno and Ogawa, officers in the First Church of Christ, with the unnamed but glorious company of men and women who in early days faced prison, risked death and the edge of the sword. In the patience of Jesus Christ they waited long to see, and finally saw the anti-Christian edicts disappear. They won against priestcraft and hostile chauvinism the right before the law to inter the dust of their loved ones in their ancestral graveyard. Yes, the very saints in Caesar's household salute us; for Prince Tokagawa's words at Washington, and better still the Crown Prince's remarkable message that charmed Christendom, are but the echoes from Christian writers and scholars high in rank and office.

On its opposite side, Christianity has brought to Japan a message to the woman, the common man, the multitude, the sick, the outcast, the leper, the prisoner, the wage earner, the victim of man's pride, power and lust; and to humanity in general. The Christian in Japan, native and foreign, has preached good tidings unto the meek, bound up the broken hearted, proclaimed liberty to the captive, and opened the prison to them that are bound. What that means,—“liberty to them that are bound,”—they know full well who have lived among the plain people of Japan, over whose minds superstition as well as suberviency has hung like a pall, influencing every action of life. When it comes to prison reform, the abolition of torture, the humanizing of the methods of prevention, correction and jurisprudence, the creation and purification of newspapers and the printed page, one has only to read Okuma's two great volumes on “Fifty years of New Japan” in order to *feel* the force of Christ at work for the redemption of Japan. Even though the Christian



initiators and reformers of these years go to a large extent unnamed, yet they have been men and women of power, as men like Count Okuma often testified.

This religion of Jesus Christ must be depended upon to regenerate Japanese Government and society. Christ is the Hope of Japan. The gospel leaven, dropped at first into the lump of Japanese feudalism, has created and recreated Japanese mind and life. It has produced and will continue to produce that temperament and that spirit, which will check the power of militarism, do away with dual government, free the Emperor for larger service, build up a parliamentary form of government, enlarge the franchise, and, in short, make the Japanese Government the servant of the people. This power of the gospel will continue to modify the educational program of the nation, bring about a proper adjustment between capital and labor, produce nobler ideals for the industrial and commercial leaders, turning the minds of many to philanthropy and stewardship; and in time help the Japanese people to fulfill their mission under God in the Far East and throughout the world.

This is our hope. Even more: it is our assurance. God can never be defeated in His purpose.

#### THE PRUSSIAN AND THE CHRISTIAN

Perhaps I can do no better in summarizing this argument than by contrasting the two great Japanese, Prince Yamagata and Joseph Neesima. Both were men of one endeavor; yet how differently they carried out their purpose. Yamagata, the soldier leader, brave, zealous, untiring in toil for Japan, the incarnation of military feudalism, the apostle of force and prussianism, and increasing opponent of ideals most cherished by lovers of the Prince of Peace. Medals, titles, honors, decorations,

fame, power (even over and behind the throne) were the guerdon of this unselfish patriot. Yet all these he counted but as junk that he might win Japan to be the military dictator of Asia and be found with her holding the sword in behalf of the soul of Japan. We saw and admired him in his younger days: the tall, slender, alert soldier. We praised him for his patriotism, though not of our type. In the coming ages, however, Prince Yamagata's name will be but a memory. Though the State may rear a lordly mausoleum over his grave it will be but a lonely spot. For Yamagata was essentially a bureaucrat. His system of government involved the leadership of a few only. It was not based upon the divine power in man. Like all things pertaining to Rome, it centered its administration in an Emperor and never went beyond.

On the other hand, there was Neesima—equally patriotic, equally unselfish, brave and persevering. Body and soul he gave also to Japan, but in Christ's way. Whether this might lead him to ostracism, exile, a crown of thorns on Calvary; whether it meant the rejection of all that he held dear as a Samurai, he was still willing to tread the path. Like Paul, he bore branded on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. How he did incarnate the nobler side of Bushido! Neesima found in Jesus the Samurai of the Ages; in the truth and life of that towering figure of all history, the realization of all his hopes and aspirations. Many of us caught his spirit. Who can ever forget his passionate appeal at the American Board meeting in Rutland, Vermont, for the means of carrying out his projects in behalf of his country? Who of us can ever forget the beginnings made in that city so sacred in Japan's classic history? There in Kyoto, near the spot which in 1869 was christened with the blood of Yokoi, the pre-Christian martyr in modern Japan,

Neesima began Doshisha with his eight young men. And now today that institution, a superb university numbering 2700 students and with an alumni counted by the thousands, including men and women of every class, clan and creed, joins with other Christian institutions in helping transform Dai Nippon into a new creature that shall bless all Asia. Neesima and men like him will live when Yamagata and the political builders of New Japan are forgotten. For Neesima was under the influence of the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Hope of Japan.



JOSEPH NEESIMA



## A Word as to Subscriptions

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